

REMARKS

The application has been amended so as to place it in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action.

Prior to this amendment, claims 1-10 were pending. This amendment cancels claims 1-10 and replaces them with claims 11-34 drafted so as to patentably recite the present invention.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation that the Official Action stated that claim 5 was directed to allowable subject matter.

The Official Action rejected claims 1-4, 6-7, and 10 under §102(e) as anticipated by KAKITANI et al. 5,978,732.

Applicants have carefully reviewed this patent and believe that it does not disclose the recited invention.

The reference merely teaches the concrete method of calculating a route to be searched, while the present invention relates to a man-machine interface for providing messages that requests a user to input a reply. Therefore, the present invention can be applied to a technique for setting a desired destination described in step ST301 in column 9, lines 18-19 of the reference. However, the reference does not disclose the detail of about a man-machine interface which is used at the time of setting the desired destination. Further, the concrete method of calculating routes which is disclosed in detail in the reference has no relation to the recited invention. Still further, the reference discloses a database of route information

for setting the desired destination, but the reference does not disclose how the database is used in a man-machine interface.

In the present invention, the necessary information for the man-machine interface, for example, requests messages and recognition words have hierarchical structure as shown in Figures 2A and 2B. In addition, a voice synthesizing unit 22 serves as output means outputting a message which request a user to input a reply. Further, a CPU 6 serves as searching means searching candidates as to a plurality of hierarchies in the hierarchical structure to determine a corresponding candidate to a reply.

The output means further outputs the next message which requests the user to input the next reply based on the corresponding candidate until the corresponding candidate becomes the target information. Accordingly, by the present invention, it is possible to retrieve the destination spot in the order of hierarchies, or to retrieve the target information while skipping one or plural hierarchies.

As the claims recite the invention including features not disclosed by the applied references, the anticipation rejection is not viable. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the anticipation rejection are respectfully requested.

The Official Action rejected claims 8-9 under \$103 as obvious over KAKITANI et al.

As noted above, the reference does not teach all of the features of the invention as recited in the independent claims. Therefore, the dependent claims are allowable regardless as to whether the reference teaches features recited in the dependent claims.

In view of the above, applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner have any questions or require clarification, the Examiner is asked to contact the undersigned attorney so that this application may continue to be expeditiously advanced.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & THOMPSON

By



Roland E. Long, Jr.
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 41,949
745 South 23rd Street
Arlington, VA 22202
Telephone: 521-2297

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